

The Christian Community

Movement for Religious Renewal

Hollywood Congregation

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Newsletter for the week of Sunday 14th February.

Dear friends, we received this letter from Christian McLean, the chair of our Council of Management:

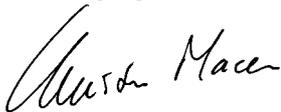
Dear congregations

I would like to write to thank you all for the continued financial support for The Christian Community you have made which has helped us weather these challenging times. During the last months when many of our regular events and services could not be held, and with restrictions as well on special events, we are delighted to say that most congregations have managed these difficulties very well. There are some congregations that have suffered, but thankfully, not to the extent that we initially feared. While some of our expenditure was reduced, the larger part continued: priests and their families still needed their stipends, and housing costs both for priests and communities continued. The fact that our situation is not far worse in due in large part to the continued support that the congregations have given, both in regular donations and also with one-off gifts. Our central reserves continue to be low at present – we took out a large number of loans to help finish the beautiful church in Stroud, which means that it would be hard for us to support unexpected needs. We do foresee that situation improving in this year.

We would therefore like to urge anyone who is not directly affected financially by the public health crisis to continue or even increase their monthly contributions to help us through these uncertain times. If you are not yet a regular contributor, we would ask you to consider starting, if you are able to. Occasional donations are also welcome. Your local treasurer or priests will supply you with all the details you need to make any payments you may be able to manage, as well as form to fill out so that we can reclaim tax under the Gift Aid scheme, if you are a UK taxpayer. You can also give quickly and easily through our website

<http://www.thechristiancommunity.co.uk/giving/>

With many thanks in advance for your consideration, and best wishes for your health and strength in these challenging times.



Hollywood

For Sunday services, please ring (02890424254), text (07974960570) or email (benvl@onetel.com) to book a place as we can only seat 11-13 people.

February

Thursday 11 th February	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00
Sunday 14th February	The Act of Consecration of Man Followed by the next of a series of short talks on The Act of Consecration of Man as a path; “Transsubstantiation” (part 1)	
Thursday 18 th February	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00

Mourne Grange (in Dawn Hall !)

Sunday 21 st February	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.15
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The gospel for Sunday is Luke 18: 18-34

One of the highest spiritual leaders of the people asked him, "Good Master, what must I do to obtain eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but One—God alone. You know the commandments, you shall not destroy marriage, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not speak untruth, and you shall honour your father and your mother! He said, "All these I have observed strictly from my youth."



Jesus, looking at him, loved him and he said, "One thing however you lack: Sell all of your possessions and give the money to the poor; thus will you achieve a treasure in the spiritual world—then come and follow me!

He was sad about these words, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw him thus, he said, "What hindrances must those overcome who are rich in outer or inner possessions, if they want to enter into the kingdom of God. Sooner would a camel walk through the eye of a needle than a rich man be able to find the entrance to the kingdom of God!" Those who heard this said, "Who then can be saved?"

He said, "For man alone it is impossible; it will be possible however through the power of God working in man."

Then Peter said to him, "Behold, we have given up everything to follow you. He replied, "Amen, the truth I say to you. No one who leaves home or wife, or brother or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in earthly life, and in the age to come eternal life."

Then he took the twelve to himself and said, "Now we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything which the prophets have written about the Son of Man will fulfil itself: He will be given over to the peoples of the world; they will mock and taunt him, they will spit upon him and scourge him and kill him, but on the third day he will rise up from the dead."

Yet his disciples understood nothing of all this. The meaning of his words remained hidden from them, and they did not recognize what he was trying to tell them.

A homily on Luke 18: 18-34



When a plant grows, it first forms leaves. Then eventually these leaves metamorphose into the rich beauty of the blossom. The blossom opens to the sun, offers its pollen of its life substance to the sun. In wedding itself to the cosmos, its petals fall away. The blossom dies, but new life is formed in the seed.

The rich young man had followed the commandments. He had become rich in spiritual beauty, blossomed into a perfect flower. He was poised to give himself to the cosmos, to become an offering. But this would involve letting go of the beautiful petals of his outer and inner wealth. To take the next step, parts of himself would have to be shed. It was a necessary condition of his further development, of his movement toward eternal life. It would naturally be accompanied by a sense of loss and grief.

Our lives too come to certain nodal points, although we may not be as conscious of the moment as was the rich young man.

When things on one level are about to be exchanged for another level, our destiny involves us in losses and griefs.

Things, people important to us seem to fall away. But that is how the cosmos gives us the opportunity to grow, to blossom, and to generate life on a higher level.

The Act of Consecration of Man gives us the opportunity to more consciously practice opening our souls, offering ourselves, and dying into a higher life.

Sunday by Sunday, we shed the riches of our outer lives for an hour of prayer and inner sacrifice. Drop by drop, morsel by morsel, we build and strengthen our capacity for sacrifice, our capacity to let go and take the next step into the cosmos.

Bit by bit we open ourselves and form the seeds of higher life.

***Every year
everything
I have ever learned***

***in my lifetime
leads back to this: the fires
and the black river of loss
whose other side***

is salvation

....

To live in this world

***you must be able
to do three things:
to love what is mortal;
to hold it***

***against your bones knowing
your own life depends on it;
and, when the time comes
to let it go,***

to let it go.

****Mary Oliver, "In Blackwater Woods."***